

EXAMINING THE REALITY OF 'THE ORIGINAL SIN'

Twenty intellectual and convincing arguments
refuting the doctrines of 'the original sin' and redemption
[absolution of sins through Jesus' sacrifice]

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***NO DOUBT THIS LIFE IS AN EXAMINATION
WHICH NEEDS YOUR FULL CONSIDERATION
AS TO WHAT YOU WILL TAKE TO
YOUR FINAL DESTINATION
ONLY TRUE BELIEF AND GOOD DEEDS ARE
YOUR WAY TO SALVATION***

(Muhammad Sherif)

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Honorific phrases in this book

(the Exalted)	Used after the mention of God/Allah to express: Glorified and Exalted is He
(blessings and peace be upon him)	Blessings and peace be upon him; used after mention of the Prophet Muhammad
(peace be upon him)	Peace be upon him; used after mention of any prophet or after mention of Angel Gabriel
(May Allah be pleased with him)	used after mention of a male Companion of the Prophet Muhammad

About the word ‘Lord’

The word *lord* in English has several related meanings. The original meaning is ‘master’ or ‘ruler’ and in this sense it is often used to refer to human beings: ‘the lord of the mansion’ or ‘*Lord* So-and-So’ (in the United Kingdom, for example). The word *Lord* with a capital L is used in the lexicon of Islam to refer to the One and Only God - Allah. In Islam, there is no ambiguity about the meaning of this word. While it is true that one may occasionally use the word *lord* (whether capitalized or not) to refer to a human being, in Islamic discourse the reference of this term is always clear from the context. Whereas for Christians, Hindus and other polytheists, the word *Lord* with a capital L may refer to Allah, to Jesus or to some imagined deity, for Muslims, there can be no plurality of meaning. Allah alone is the Lord, and the Lord is Allah - not Jesus, not Rama, not any other being.

The Editor

About the word 'Allah'

Although the English word ‘God’ has often been used interchangeably in this book with the word Allah, there is a difference. ‘Allah’ is the word in Arabic that is translated as ‘God’. However, ‘Allah’ has a much more precise meaning than ‘God’. ‘Allah’ is not merely an Arabic term for the word ‘god’. Instead, the root word of the word ‘Allah’ is *ilâh*, which means ‘a god’. There are countless numbers of made-up ‘gods’, but only One True God whose name is Allah. The word ‘Allah’ literally means ‘the worshipped’. Allah is, thus, the proper name for the **only Being that is worthy of worship**, the True Creator of the universe. By saying ‘Allah’, Muslims are, in essence, negating every other entity which people wrongfully worship. The name ‘Allah’ is how God Almighty has referred to Himself in the Qur’an¹, and how Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) also referred to Him. Therefore, in this work, the term ‘Allah’ will often be used in reference to this One and Only God, who is worthy of worship.

¹ The Qur’an is the sacred book or scripture revealed to Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him).

Introduction

Every individual is born into a religious environment that is not in accordance with his/her choice; a child is raised to follow the religion or ideology of his/her family, society or culture. Even as a new-born, he/she is assigned either the religion of his/her family or the ideology of the state; in some countries, the child's assigned religion is even recorded on his/her birth certificate. By the time individuals reach their teens, they have usually accepted the beliefs of their parents or their particular society, feeling that they have little choice in the matter.

However, individuals often encounter, or are exposed, to various beliefs and ideologies throughout the course of their lives, leading many to question long-held beliefs, traditions or philosophical ideas. They begin to question the validity of their own beliefs. Seekers of truth often reach a point of confusion, especially upon realising that the believers of every religion, sect, ideology and philosophy claim to profess the one and only truth.

To be more specific, amongst the doctrines which the followers of Jesus ('alayhi as-salâm - peace be upon him) have inherited across centuries is the belief in 'the original sin'. This

booklet discusses the reality of this belief from both theoretical and logical point of views.

Before we proceed with the book, here is a reminder to bear the following four things in mind in one's quest for the truth:

Firstly, Allah (*subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ* - Glorified and Exalted is He) has given us the ability and the intellect to discover the answer to this crucial question, which is also a life-changing decision: **What is the True Religion?**

Secondly, Allah, the Most Compassionate, has not left us to go astray without any guidance. Indeed, He sent us prophets with scriptures to show us the right path.

Thirdly, always remember the underlying reason for this search: the ever-lasting life to come depends upon finding the true religion in this life. This should be your ultimate motivation, and a driving force to keep you searching until you are completely satisfied.²

2. The Bible, in its present form, confirms that seeking the truth is the main cause for salvation. In John 8:32, it has been stated: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Muslims believe that the existing form of the Bible contains elements of the original true message, although it has been altered significantly.

Fourthly, one can only determine the true path and make a rational and correct decision if one willingly puts aside, all the emotions and prejudices, which often blind one to reality.

The Facts about ‘The Original Sin’³

20 Arguments Regarding the Doctrine of the ‘Original Sin’

Background

According to the explanation of this doctrine, Adam sinned when he disobeyed Allah and ate from the forbidden tree. According to the Christian theology, the following eight doctrines branch off the ‘Original Sin’ principle:

1. All Adam’s descendants inherit his sin, which means that all human beings are born with this Original Sin on their account.
2. For God’s justice to be achieved, a price must be paid as a penalty for every sin that has been committed, in order for that sin to be wiped out and the individual to be forgiven.
3. The only way to wipe out sin is to shed blood, and according to Paul, “without the shedding of blood there is no remission.” (Hebrews 9:22)
4. However, this blood must be perfect, sinless, and incorruptible.

³ Compiled from Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus Led Me to Islam*.

5. Christians believe that Jesus (peace be upon him) alone could pay the infinite price of sin; this is because they believe that his blood is perfect, sinless, and incorruptible, and he is the alleged son of God, the infinite God.
6. Christian theology says that Jesus shed his holy sinless blood, suffered indescribable agony, and died to pay for the sins of people. This concept is known in Christian theology as 'atonement'.
7. Christians believe that nobody can be saved (attain salvation) unless he or she accepts Jesus Christ as his or her redeemer. In other words, salvation is restricted to those who believe that Jesus was willingly crucified, killed on the cross, and shed his blood as a price of that sin. Acceptance of this doctrine is the only way to attain 'salvation'.
8. Otherwise, everyone is condemned to suffer eternally in hell because of his or her sinful nature and originally inherited sin from the father of humankind, Prophet Adam.

The doctrine of the Original Sin can be divided into six distinct parts:

- 1) The factuality of the existence of the Original Sin.
- 2) Humanity's inheritance of the Original Sin.

- 3) Belief that God's justice requires a penalty of blood which must be paid against that sin.
- 4) Belief that Jesus has paid the price for the sins of all humankind by sacrificing his blood and 'dying on the cross'.
- 5) The rationality of 'God's sacrifice' dogma.
- 6) Salvation from sin (original and newly attained) is only possible for those who believe in his vicarious sacrifice.

Analysis

Arguments against the six parts of the dogma of the 'Original Sin' are as follows:

Argument against the first part: the factuality of the Original Sin

- 1. There is no conflict between the Qur'anic verses and the Christian theology with reference to the fact that Adam committed a sin when he ate from the forbidden tree. However, Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an that Prophet Adam repented after that and submitted himself completely to his Lord; consequently, he was forgiven by Allah for the sin he had committed. This is a tenet of Islamic belief and has been mentioned in three different chapters in the Qur'an (2: 37, 7: 24 and 20: 122). Based on Adam's

repentance and Allah's acceptance of his repentance, the sin of Adam was not inherited by his children. Hence, it did not require the suffering and death of Jesus Christ (or of anyone else) in order to be forgiven.

Argument against the second part: 'All human beings inherited Adam's sin'

2. The doctrine of the inherited sin has no support from the words of Jesus.
3. Indeed, Jesus himself regarded children as innocent and pure, **not born in sin**. This is clear from his reported saying:

Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for such is the Kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. (Mark 10:14-15)

4. The doctrine of the inherited sin implies that all people after Adam and before Jesus were born with the Original Sin and died with the Original Sin on their account; hence, all of them will be cast into hellfire because they did not even know of this dogma, and thus could not profess it!

5. The doctrine of the inherited sin has **no support in the words of the prophets who had come either before him or after him.** If it was required by God, then they would have told their people about it and taught them to believe in it; this is because all prophets were sent to guide people towards the way of paradise and ward them away from sins and hellfire.
6. All the prophets taught that every human being is accountable for his or her own sins, and hence children will not be punished for the sins of their fathers. Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{That no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another.} (*Qur'an 53: 38*)

He has also said:

{Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained.} (*Qur'an 74: 38*)
7. Sin, as it is said, are not inherited; they are something which a person acquires for oneself by doing what one should not do or refraining from what one should do. Rationally considered, it would be the height of injustice to condemn the entire human race for a sin committed thousands of years ago by the first parents. Sin is a wilful

transgression of the law of Allah. The responsibility or blame for it must lie only on the person committing it, **and not on his or her descendants**. It is the height of misanthropy to even consider such a thing. How unreasonable and hard-hearted a person can become by believing that every baby is sinful at birth!

8. Saying that the Original Sin, committed by our father, Adam (peace be upon him), was inherited through humanity goes against the attribute of mercy which Allah attributes to Himself. With this, the creed of the inheritance of the Original Sin has no room whatsoever in Islamic teachings.

Argument against the third part: ‘Blood penalty’

The third part of the Original Sin doctrine says that God’s justice requires that a price must be paid for the sins of humankind (original and otherwise) and that if God were to pardon (forgive) a sinner without punishment, it would be a denial of His justice.

The response to that has two points:

9. This view reflects complete ignorance of two of Allah’s attributes, namely mercy and forgiveness. To elaborate, if Allah finds some real good in you and sees that you are

sincerely repentant, having a real urge to conquer the evil within you, then Almighty Allah will forgive your failings and sins, out of His loving mercy and forgiveness.

10. The God we worship (Allah) is the Most Strong and Most Rich; no one can harm Him. Consequently, if He prescribes a law and demands obedience, then it is not for His own benefit to abide by it; it is for the benefit of humankind. If we disobey Him, we are the losers, not Allah. If He punishes a person before death for his or her faults and sins, it is not for His own satisfaction or compensation, but in order to check evil and purify/reform the sinner, out of His mercy. Bearing these facts in mind, claiming that Allah's justice requires a price to be paid for the sins of others is not valid.

Argument against the fourth part of the ‘Original Sin’: Jesus (peace be upon him) was sacrificed for humanity

The fourth part of the Original Sin doctrine says that Jesus (peace be upon him) paid the penalty for all the sins (the Original Sins and any others) by sacrificing his blood on the cross of Calvary. The response to this proposition has ten points:

11. The Christian concept of salvation has no support in the words of Jesus (peace be upon him). It is not historically correct to say that Jesus (peace be upon him) had come to die willingly and deliberately for the sins of all humanity. In reality, the present form of the Bible testifies that he **did not wish to die on the cross**. (See Mark 14:36)
12. Indeed, the Bible points to the fact that God (Allah), not Jesus (peace be upon him), is the **ultimate saviour**:

You may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after Me. I, I am the Lord, **and besides Me there is no Saviour**. (Isaiah 43:10-11)
13. To punish a man who is not guilty for the sins of others is the height of injustice, harshness and lack of mercy, which cannot be attributed to the Almighty.
14. Rationally, we cannot accept that the suffering and death of one man can wipe out the sins of others. It is similar to a father, for example, removing one of his good teeth to relieve the pain of his child's bad tooth. Hence, the idea of crucifixion is false and illogical.
15. Jesus (like all the other prophets) was sent to convey a message and to be an example for his followers during his

time on the earth. He was not sent to deliberately die for them on the cross or offer his blood to absolve their sins.

16. Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an that He is the Most Merciful and Most Compassionate; He forgives the sinner no matter how many and how evil are the sins, once he or she repents. **He may even forgive the sinner who does not repent**, according to His will, mercy and favour.
17. The concept of atonement is false because it indirectly encourages people to sin, since their sins will be wiped out through someone else once they believe in him! Further, if someone died for another person's sins, what is the point of adhering to good and forbidding evil?

Argument against the fifth part: the ‘sacrifice’ of Jesus (peace be upon him)

18. Christian doctrine states that Jesus (peace be upon him) was crucified by the administration of the Roman governor of Jerusalem, Pontius Pilate, with the cooperation of certain Jewish leaders.⁴ However, the Qur'an has explained that Jesus did not die; rather, Allah raised him when they attempted to kill him. Allah replaced him with another

⁴ Harrington, ‘Who Killed Jesus?’

person who resembled him, and it was this other person who was killed. To this day, the Christians believe that Jesus himself was the one who was killed on the cross. Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{And [for] their saying: Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah. And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain. Rather, Allah raised him to Himself. And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise.} (*Qur'an 4: 157-158*)

19. Here is another proof that Jesus was not killed and is still alive. In the Islamic teachings, there is clear evidence indicating the second coming of Jesus before the final hour; this is an additional and final miracle for Jesus. He will return not as God, as the Christians believe, but as Jesus, Allah's messenger and slave, as he has always been. The purpose of his coming will be to correct the misconceptions surrounding his message and mission. According to a statement of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), he will stay for forty years, and these will be the happiest years of life on this earth. During that time, those who had misconceptions about him will correct

their understanding and believe in him as a messenger, not as the son of God (Allah).

It was narrated by Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

<<By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, it will not be long before the son of Mary descends amongst you, a just judge and ruler. He will break the cross, kill the swine and abolish the tribute paid by Jews and Christians. Money will be so plentiful that no one will accept it. At that time, a single prostration will be better than this world and everything in it.

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) then said: Read if you wish (the following verse of the Qur'an):

{And there is none from the People of the Scripture but that he will surely believe in Jesus before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection he will be against them a witness.} (*Qur'an 4: 159*)>> (Bukhari)

This ends the answer of the fifth part of the doctrine.

Argument against the sixth part: Salvation only possible via belief in Christ's vicarious 'sacrifice'

20. The Bible itself contradicts the notion of the 'Original Sin'. In this regard, the Bible says about the dispute concerning the Original Sin:

The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labour. (I Corinthians 3:8)

Original Sin and atonement from an Islamic perspective

Islam declares that:

- ❖ People cannot transfer their responsibilities to saviours or saints. Each person's redemption and salvation depends upon his or her own deeds.
- ❖ Forgiveness of sins (salvation) can only be attained through repentance to Allah and sincere and persistent efforts to fight off evil and do good. Allah forgives the faults and sins of those in whom He sees real goodness and those who have turned away from their sins and reformed themselves - without punishing them **or any other person on their behalf.**

In numerous verses in the Qur'an and statements of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), it is mentioned that **those who repent are granted** forgiveness from sins; furthermore, their sins are replaced with an equivalent reward, and:

{...And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.} (*Qur'an 2: 112*)

In many verses of the Noble Qur'an, Allah Almighty calls on people to repent sincerely.

{[O Muhammad], inform My slaves that it is I who am the Forgive, the Merciful and that it is My punishment which is the painful punishment.} (*Qur'an* 15: 49-50)

Here, Allah is inviting the sinners to repent; regardless of the magnitude of their sins, He will forgive them. At the same time, He is warning those who do not repent: no punishment can be compared to His punishment.

He has also said:

{Say: O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgive, the Merciful. And return [in repentance] to your Lord and submit to Him before the punishment comes upon you; then you will not be helped.} (*Qur'an* 39: 53-54)

See how beautifully, soundly and logically, the book of Allah, the *Qur'an*, addresses the issue of sinning and atonement. It must be noted that Islam confirms that the Islamic approach to the subject was revealed in all the divine messages, including the message of Jesus Christ. May peace and blessings be upon him and all the prophets!

Conclusion

By maintaining the concept of the Original Sin, the entire notion of justice in Christian theology becomes flawed. Having analyzed the six tenets of this doctrine and the arguments against them, the structure of the whole principle of ‘Original Sin and atonement’ is proven to be false. This is because it has no support either in the revealed sources or in logic; rather, its support lies only in the ideology of the Christian Church.

A Call to Reason

A concluding suggestion: consider what everyone has in common. Come, let us reason together:

{Say: O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah. But if they turn away, then say: **Bear witness that we are Muslims** [submitting to Him].} (*Qur'an 3: 64*)

{People of the Scripture} is the respectful title given to the Jews and the Christians in the Noble Qur'an. Muslims are being commanded to invite them with noble and respectful words: O People of the Book, O learned people, O people who claim to be the recipients of Divine revelation of a holy scripture, let us gather onto a common platform: that we worship none but Allah, because none but Him is worthy of worship, because He is our Lord and Cherisher, our Sustainer and Evolver, worthy of all praise, prayer and devotion.

These truths are basic and an integral part of any human being's intellect. Sort through the layers of indoctrination which

hide this simple fact, and one will be able to see that deep down, every human being retains the simple and obvious concept of Allah. In essence, every human being agrees that there is only One God worthy of worship, One God who is free of partners, helpers, or anything that is ascribed to Him falsely.

This is it

In this book, you have been shown the right path, and Allah has given you the ability to distinguish right from wrong; He has also given you the freedom of choice as to whether or not to accept the message of Islam. If you accept His call, you will be warmly welcomed into paradise. If you reject it, you will end up with the biggest loss ever imagined: the loss of paradise and the guarantee of abiding in hellfire for all eternity. Take a moment to comprehend what **eternity** really means. It is a very frightening realization.

To those who have been faithful Christians, you are warmly welcome to embrace Islam because:

- ❖ Jesus asked his followers to follow Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) whenever he appeared;⁵
- ❖ When Jesus comes back before the end of this world, he will follow Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) and abide by his teachings.⁶

⁵ See for more discussion: 'Who Deserves to be Worshipped?', Chapter: 'The Amazing Prophecies of Muhammad in the Bible. See Appendix.

⁶ See for more discussion: "Who Deserves to be Worshipped?", Chapter: '11 facts about Jesus'. See Appendix.

Yes, since Jesus called his true followers to follow it while he was on the earth, and will follow Islam when he comes back, all faithful Christian should follow Islam as well.

To those who have been believing Jews, remember that Abraham and Moses surrendered themselves completely to their Lord, whether they called Him Elohenu, God, or Allah. All pride in ethnicity or ancestry is vain: what will matter in the end is your individual relationship with your Creator. This means total submission - Islam.

To those of other faiths or who, until now, did not feel that they had any faith at all, consider this message **now**, without any reluctance or hesitation, before it is too late; **before death overtakes you.** It can be soon. Who knows?

A Whisper

Some people are not able to find the truth because of their blind commitment to their beliefs. Their tenacious adherence is usually not based on an intellectual understanding of the teachings, but on powerful cultural and emotional influences. Because they were brought up in a particular family or society, they firmly cling to the beliefs of that group, believing that they are upholding the truth.

There are others who are convinced about the religion of Islam and are mentally ready to embrace it. However, when they come to the point when they remember the drastic change in their lives which might not please their families and communities, they tend to go back and change their minds about the decision.

Here is a whisper in their ears:

Irrespective of the amount of money, prestige, position, and power an unbeliever might have possessed in this life, he or she will never have enough to buy his or her entrance into paradise. In the hereafter, the poorest from among the inhabitants of earth, who had testified to the truth of Islam, will be far happier and more dignified than the richest person who did not accept the message of Islam.

Rejecting Allah's message is the biggest sin that one can commit. For this reason, while the soul of an unbeliever is still in his or her body, the wise individual should quickly utilize the occasion: he or she is still alive to accept Allah's message before it is too late. The time for repentance is limited. Once death arrives, it is no longer possible to obtain forgiveness.⁷ Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{[For such is the state of the disbelievers], until, when death comes to one of them, he says: My Lord, send me back that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind. No! It is only a word he is saying...} ⁸ (*Qur'an* 23: 99-100)

Religion is, without question, the most important aspect of a person's life as it impacts whether or not a person is rightly guided; it follows, therefore, that choosing the true faith is the most important personal decision one must make; this decision needs to be based on clarity and total conviction. When it comes to matters of religion and creed, nothing must be left to

⁷ Compiled from Caraballo, *My Great Love for Jesus Led Me to Islam*.

⁸ The unbelievers will ask for a 'second chance' when they see the angels ready to punish them, but it will be too late; they were given the time, the intellect and the guidance, but they neglected it for years till time ran out.

chance. This is because the one who is truly guided - as opposed to the one who is not - will surely find eternal happiness in the hereafter!

Being presented with the previous proofs, whoever has a sane intellect can analyze and reason; a crossroad has been reached, in which Allah (Glorified is He) calls all people to follow the clear, straight road and avoid all the foggy, zigzag ones. The right path has now become distinct from the wrong path, as Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an:

{...The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in *tâghoot*⁹ and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.} (*Qur'an* 2: 256)

He has also specified:

{There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in *tâghoot* and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.} (*Qur'an* 2: 256)

⁹ In cases *where* we have chosen to retain the Arabic, the transliterated word or phrase is shown in italics the first time it appears in the text.

It is my duty and responsibility, as a member of this great planet, and as the one who has submitted my free will to the law and commandments of the Supreme Being, to urge all human beings to stay away from the worship of false deities, to stop putting their faith in statues, sphinxes, figures, amulets, talismans, horseshoes, and any other objects that have been manufactured by humans or created by God. After repentance, a person should submit completely to the will of Allah, the Only God of the universe.

May the light of truth shine in our minds and in our hearts. May it lead us to peace and certitude in this life and eternal bliss in the hereafter.

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Appendix

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You may also visit the following web sites for updated information and a wealth of reading material:

Online information about Islam:

www.islamfortoday.com

www.islam-guide.com

www.islamonline.net

www.islam-qa.com

www.islamtomorrow.com

www.missionislam.com

www.themodernreligion.com

www.witness-pioneer.org

www.youngmuslims.ca

Online bookstores:

www.al-hidaayah.co.uk

www.dar-us-salam.com

www.iiphonline.com

www.soundvision.com

*Glossary of Islamic Terms**

<i>Da‘wah</i>	دعوة	disseminating the teachings of Islam and calling people to accept and embrace Islam
<i>tâghoot</i>	طاغوت	idols; everything evil that is worshipped besides Allah

* The Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions of the Transliteration Chart found in this book. If a word has become part of the English language (i.e., is found in a dictionary of Standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this Glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.